THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (DR. VALLABHBHAI KATHIRIA): (a) to (e) Yes, Sir. Government's attention has been drawn to reports regarding CBI probe into purchase of bogies & couplers bought as well as losses to PSUs manufacturing wagons due to very low rates. The Board of Directors of BBUNL is seized of the issue of purchase of bogies and couplers. Ministry of Railways places orders for wagons on competitive prices, determined on the basis of open tenders.

Suspension of Operation at RCW, Raniganj

830. SHRIMATI CHANDRA KALA PANDEY:
SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:

Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) whether a notice has been issued on 30th June, 2000 declaring suspension of operation in the ""Refractory and Ceramic Works, Raniganj (Lalkuthi Works)" from 1st July, 2000; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (DR. VALLABHBHAI KATHIRIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) BIFR had sanctioned a rehabilitation package of M/s. Burn Standard Co. Ltd. on 16.4.1999. The main strategy for revival was to revive/revitalise the operations of the company's works only at Howrah, Burnpur and Salem. BIFR revival scheme did not envisage revival of 7 loss making refractoring units (LRUs). All the employees of these units were to be offered VRS and budgetary support of Rs. 9.00 crores each was to be provided during the years 1998-99 and 1999-2000 as interest free non-plan assistance for payment of salary & wages to be recovered from sale of their assets. Notice of Suspension of operations in Raniganj and Lalkoti Works are therefore in conformity with BIFR revival scheme.

Closing down of unviable PSUs

831. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) whether government have decided to close down six or more unviable public sector undertakings on the recommendations of a Government appointed Expert Group, till date, as reported in the Hindustan Times, dated 21st June, 2000.

(b) if so, the details thereof, and

(c) whether Government have earmarked any amount for making payment to workers who may seek/accept Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS)?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (DR. VALLABHBHAI KATHIRIA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. It has been decided to take action for closure of six PSEs, which have been considered unviable after considering the recommendations of the Expert Group set up to explore the possibilities of revival. Government have also decided to make payments under the Voluntary Separation Scheme (VSS), to the remaining employees of these PSEs, which would be substantially higher than the compensation available under the ID Act. This decision will apply to about 3700 employees in these PSEs, namely, Mining & Allied Machinery Corporation (MAMC), National Bicycle Corporation of India Ltd. (NBCIL), Bharat Process & Mechanical Engineers Ltd. (BPMEL), Weighbird India Ltd. (WIL), Rehabilitation Industries Corporation (RIC) and Tannery and Footwear Corporation Ltd. (TAFCO).

(c) An amount of 200 Crores has been approved by the Government for the purpose of payment of Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) benefits under Voluntary Separation Scheme (VSS) alongwith statutory dues.

Default in payment of wages and other dues by PSUs

832. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:
SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:

Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of Public Sector Undertakings have defaulted payment of wages and other statutory dues for the last few months;

(b) if so, the names of such undertakings and the details of the non-payment of wages and other dues and since when; and

(c) the steps being taken to clear the dues?